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ABSTRACT

Gender planning and vocational education and technical training (VETT) in Palestine were examined through the following: review of available literature and policy-oriented reports, discussions with educators in the field, and roundtable discussion in which representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor and experts participated. The following issues were considered: development of an analytical approach to gender planning (gender diagnosis, institutionalization of gender, gender integration); historical development of VETT in Palestine (contributions of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA] and the Jordanian Ministry of Education and effects of Israeli occupation); characteristics of VETT (target group attraction, fragmentation and dispersal). The gender analysis of VETT was organized around the four spheres of VETT as follows: the technical sphere (gender equity or pay disparity); the political sphere; the organizational sphere; and the research sphere. Special attention was paid to the following topics: VETT provisions; postpreparatory and dropout training opportunities; postsecondary training provisions; VETT and employment opportunities; Israeli occupation and demands of the Israeli labor market; UNRWA policy, welfare, and development; nongovernmental organizations, nationalism, and development; and Israeli authorities as decision makers. (Contains 24 references and 11 tables.) (MN)

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GENDER
AND
SOCIETY
Working Paper #4

GENDER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

"Gender Planning and Vocational Education and Technical Training in Palestine"
An Initial Framework

Lamis Abu Nahleh

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Gender
And
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Gender Planning and Vocational Education and Technical Training in Palestine: An Initial Framework

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Women's Studies Program
Birzeit University
Palestine
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FOREWORD
Women's Studies Program

The rising educational levels of Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza over the past two decades is an important indicator of social transformation. The link between increased education and the expansion of other life opportunities for Palestinian women, however, remains a vexed question. For example, despite the marked increase in education, the formal labor force participation of Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza has remained quite low, with figures from the new Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics registering percentage of female participation in the total labor force in 1993 at 9.5% in the West Bank, 6.2% in East Jerusalem and 1.8% in Gaza.

As is true elsewhere in the Third World, these figures underestimate women's employment, overlooking temporary, agricultural and informal work, and certainly do not represent the multi-faceted nature of women's work and economic contribution to family livelihood and to society. In addition, these figures also reflect the structural constraints of the Palestinian economy under Israeli occupation, which has also had severe effects on male employment prospects.

Whatever the problems in statistical measurement, however, it remains the case that the link between Palestinian women's education and women's employment is weak. At a time when the educational system and economic planning are in Palestinian hands for the first time, it is crucial to identify the factors contributing to this weakness and to develop and promote educational and economic policies that expand women and men's opportunities for meaningful work and sustainable livelihoods.

Lamis Abu Nahleh's examination of vocational education and technical training policies and practices in Palestine introduces a gender-analytical perspective that sheds light on one key educational factor that contributes to the weak link between education and employment for Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza. Her "gender diagnosis" of the systems and institutions that provide vocational education and technical training (VETT) in Palestine, including their goals, programs, student enrollment, structure and curricula, identifies a fragmented and often irrelevant system that does not meet the needs of either young men or women for training and which exhibits decided gender bias. Women, for example, constitute only 13% of the students enrolled in VETT institutions. Abu Nahleh also reviews the proposed policies to improve VETT and finds that while gender inequity is sometimes recognized by experts and policy-makers, their agendas and recommendations for change do not address this inequity in substantive ways. In particular, she warns that a focus on linking vocational training and education exclusively to industry may exclude women.

This paper represents the findings of the first stage of Abu Nahleh's research on vocational education and technical training in Palestine; in the second stage, now underway, Abu Nahleh is conducting a survey of students in fourteen community

colleges and selected high schools in Ramallah, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus and surrounding rural areas. The survey explores female and male students' knowledge of, and attitudes towards, vocational education, job opportunities and their own status and aspirations.

The methodology employed by Abu Nahleh in her paper is also useful for the study of other institutions in Palestinian society. Abu Nahleh has used the gender planning approach which argues that gender is an intrinsic component of all policies, programs and projects that seek to address the needs of social groups (in this case the vocational student cohort). Women are thus not viewed as isolated from the rest of society. The gender planning approach examines the "web of institutionalization" of gender within institutions, and identifies four "spheres" (political, organizational, technical and research) in which gender is an integral component. These spheres are interrelated (in a "web") and effective gender-equitable policies and programs require their orchestration.

The recognition of gender as a basis for social organization and a category of analysis has opened up important new avenues for scholarly research and for equitable and effective policy formulation. The contribution by Lamis Abu Nahleh here has been supported through a research grant from the World University Service, as part of a program to promote gender-aware policy research by Palestinian women. It was also presented at a June 1995 conference in Tunis on "Education and Vocational Education in the Arab World and Europe," convened by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and will be published with the conference proceedings. Its focus and method also complement an on-going collaborative research project on "Palestinian Women in Society (PWIS)," undertaken by the Women's Studies Program and other local researchers. The PWIS project is a gender-informed assessment of existing literature and research on post-1967 Palestinian society in four areas we consider relevant to women: economy, education, social entitlements and support, and culture and society.

The Women's Studies Program at Birzeit University is publishing the "Gender and Society working paper series in order to begin a discussion on critical issues in the study of gender relations in Palestinian and Arab society. We also are interested in contributing to the on-going debate on how to develop strategies, policies and practices to build a democratic Palestinian society of equal citizens whose political, social and economic rights are recognized and promoted.

Gender Planning and Vocational Education and Technical Training in Palestine: An Initial Framework

Lamis Abu Nahleh

I. Introduction[1]

With the launching of the peace process at the Madrid Conference in 1991, Palestinians have entered a new political era. On the one hand, since the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has taken over certain sectors like health, education, and social welfare, Palestinians have set out to restructure and build their institutions; on the other, the international community is interested in promoting the peace process hoping to make headway towards a settlement in the Middle East. The efforts of the two sides, though from different perspectives, are focused on the development of human resources, a substantial and legitimate basis for the development of any Third World country. For the Palestinians, however, a real settlement is contingent on their ability to plan for and achieve the comprehensive and sustainable development of Palestinian society. As it stands, Palestinians do not have full control over their resources or their economy, which hinders planning, institutional building and policy formulation and ultimately makes it hard to define the nature of the future Palestinian state.

In light of this, the Women's Studies Program (WSP) at Birzeit University sees it as crucial to join in these efforts and participate in this process. In this respect, we see we have a dual role to play: to participate actively in the policy-making (political) sphere, and to contribute to the research sphere. Conducting gendered and policy-oriented research is essential in this phase when efforts have been exerted to formulate policies for the reconstruction and building of Palestinian institutions to ensure the integration of gender into planning and policy formulation. Research assists the Program in seizing opportunities to actively feed into planning and policy formulation and share in representing the practical and strategic interests and needs of men and women since gender integration into policy and planning is an important avenue for these needs and interests to be met equitably and provides a basis for healthy socio-economic and political development.

Basically, Palestinian society is a youthful society with about half of its population falling within the age range of 4 to 14 years old[2]; it is thus natural to focus on preparing youth to be actively and effectively involved in the country's economy. Due to the importance of vocational education and technical training (VETT) in providing access to employment, it is seen as a solution to the problem of youth. Almost three decades of Israeli occupation of Palestine has had serious structural implications for Palestinian society. The FAFO study on Palestinian society refers to the impact of Israeli occupation on the life of Palestinians, stating that,

> Israeli political control has affected the daily life of Palestinians in several ways, most importantly, perhaps, through the restrictions on the

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[1] Sincere appreciation to all my colleagues at the Women's Studies Program for their support and comments, especially Lisa Taraki, Penny Johnson, Rema Hammami and Islah Jad for their editing and feedback which helped in formulating a stronger paper.

[2] Hassan Abu Libdeh et. al. "Population Characteristics and Trends," *Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank, and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions*. Oslo: FAFO, 1994 , p. 47.

> movement and forcible changes in the housing situations of families...and at the community and national levels, it prevents systematic planning for the future."[3]

Constant weakening of the agricultural sector, lack of control over the labor market and total dependency of all productive sectors on the Israeli economy have all worked in the interest of serving the Israeli market and the Israeli economy. In addition, the absence of a national authority, and the prevailing of a traditional social structure, have contributed to the underdevelopment of Palestinian society and economy. Israeli policy, be it in education, health, or labor, has served Israeli interests while Palestinian development initiatives have been unable to promote the development of Palestinian capacities, but have been concerned with the social survival of Palestinians and their ability to resist occupation. As a result of the dispersion of decision making and the disparity of perspective and interests, Palestinian society remained underdeveloped, lacking a firm infrastructure.

This underdevelopment has manifested itself in weak institutions and structures in general and produced an acute state of gender disparity in particular. The FAFO survey identified the three components of the labour force: the "employed", the "unemployed" and those "outside the labour force". The survey shows a minimal participation of women in the labour force; however, it cautions that this should not imply that women are not productive;

> On the contrary, the results of women's use of time shows that women, on average, spend 60 hours a week on housework and income generating activities. The majority of women are thus "occupied" more than full-time with productive and reproductive activities.[4]

The low participation of women in formal labor is mainly caused by Israeli control over labor markets. For instance, the construction sector, a totally male-oriented sector, was developed at the expense of other labor sectors as it was the most needed sector by the Israeli market. Thus when there was a high demand for construction labor, women were left unemployed.

The economic structure imposed on the Palestinians, especially in terms of job opportunities and in terms of defining the size and qualifications of the labor force, has indirectly affected the education of men and women. Since 1948, Palestinians have invested significantly in the education of their children to make up for the loss of their land and to give their children an avenue to social mobility. However, research shows that, for both economic and cultural reasons, the education of males is given priority over that of females in the family.[5] Since job opportunities are defined mainly by the Israeli market and are restricted by Israeli political policies, these opportunities are more available for men. Also, since women get lower pay than

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[3] *Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank, and Arab Jerusalem: Summary of a Survey of Living Conditions*, Oslo: FAFO, 1994, pp.5-6.

[4] *ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[5] Marianne Heiberg. "Education" *The Palestinian Society in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip: A Survey of the Living Conditions*, Oslo: FAFO, 1994, p. 131.

men and their mobility is more constrained, families prefer to invest in the education of males to get a better output. In addition, it is widely believed that once women get married their families will no longer have access to or control over their salaries while men remain the source of family continuity and economic support. In the FAFO study, Hammami reports that women's access to and control over resources is delimited by the status of the husband or the family, and thus economically, the majority of women are considered dependent, which limits their chances to be part of decision making.[6]

As stated earlier, the fact that Palestinian society is a young society means that education and in particular VETT should be among the main concerns of development planners. The past two years have witnessed efforts on behalf of international agencies and local institutions to investigate the system of VETT. These recent studies and earlier available literature on VETT report similar findings: that the current VETT system in Palestine is inefficient, ineffective and irrelevant. A few suggest plans for reforming it and promoting its role. A review of the literature on VETT reveals that although on the whole gender discrepancies are recognized, proposals for developing VETT do not account for this gap and do not consider it a serious problem that requires an urgent solution. VETT is seen as inequitable, but the nature of inequity is not specified, nor the reasons underlying it uncovered. [7]

This paper is part of a larger research project on VETT in Palestine undertaken currently by the Women's Studies Program (WSP) at Birzeit University. It is based on a review of available literature and policy oriented reports, discussions with educators in the field, and on the outcome of a roundtable discussion organized by the WSP in which representatives of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor in charge of vocational training and education and technical training in their respective ministries, as well as experts in the field, participated. The discussion focused on Mazen Hashweh's paper "Towards an Efficient, Effective, and Relevant National Training System in Palestine", (1995) and an overview of VETT in terms of what it is offering to both men and women.[8]

The purpose of the study undertaken here is to examine VETT in Palestine from a gender planning perspective. The approach "argues that gender is an issue in all policies, programs and projects in the sense that they are formulated to

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[6] Rema Hammami, in Heiberg, *op.cit.*, p. 349.

[7] In a recent paper (July 1995) titled "Palestinian Technical and Vocational Training: Current Situation, Problems, and Reform Proposals", M. Tull gives a comprehensive review of the most recent research done on VETT in the last 5 years, and he summarizes both national and international attempts at solving major problems of VETT. These do not include any developed plan to solve the question of the low participation of women in VETT.

[8] It should be noted here that the data used in this study is borrowed mainly from secondary sources. For the purpose of data disaggregation undertaken here, some of the data was reorganized and recalculated into percentages. Though some of them are currently incorrect due to the political changes occurring in the past two years, they were still used at this stage of the research. For the second stage, data from primary sources will be used.

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meet the needs of 'people', 'communities', 'target groups', or 'households'."[9] From this perspective, the analysis presented involves four separate but interrelated spheres: the political, the organizational, the technical, and the research spheres in an attempt to investigate if gender is an integral part of the competence of planners, organizers and providers of VETT.[10] To state it briefly, the study tries to answer two questions: first, in addition to its problems in being inefficient, ineffective and irrelevant, is VETT in Palestine sufficiently equitable to contribute to the development of Palestinian society? Second, where does the responsibility for gender equity and integration in the system of VETT lie, if it exists at all? It is suggested here that if gender is not considered a cross-cutting issue integrated in the four above-mentioned spheres and if these spheres do not operate in an "orchestrated" manner, it will be unlikely for VETT to be equitable either in social or in gender terms.

II. Analytical Approach: Gender Planning

Gender Diagnosis

The low rate of women participating in vocational education and training in Palestine cannot be overlooked even when we undertake a hasty review of the system. To arrive at an initial understanding of the reasons, a "gender diagnosis"[11] of VETT is needed. This approach does not focus on women as a social group or community isolated from the rest of the society. Instead, it uses gender as a main unit of analysis and carries out a disaggregation of the groups under consideration, looking at the gender roles and gender relations of both men and women within a certain context in a particular community. Carolyn Moser has identified three gender roles, the reproductive, the productive and the community managing roles, which women play in accordance with the gender division of labor in their community.[12] In many societies, most women play these three roles, while men infrequently do certain domestic chores but are mainly involved in productive work. Caren Levy added a fourth role, the "constituency-based politics"[13] role which is normally considered paid

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[9] Caren Levy. "Critical Issues in Translating Gender Concerns Into Planning Competence In the 1990s". A paper presented at Joint ACSP and AESOP Int. Congress, Planning Transatlantic: Global Change and Local Problems, Oxford UK, (July 8-12, 1991), p.6.

[10] *ibid.*, p. 1

[11] This concept has been developed by researchers at the Development Planning Unit (DPU), the University College London, London, UK.

[12] Moser defines these roles as follows: The reproductive role, which although basically concerned with bearing and rearing children and organizing the household extends to include the reproduction of the labor force and the society as a whole; the productive role, which is any kind of paid work; and the community managing role, which refers to work done voluntarily to provide basic services and resources for the community which are not provided by the state. See C. Moser, pp. 27-36.

[12] Caren Levy modified the gender analysis framework (1991) initiated by Moser in 1985 by adding a fourth gender role, the constituency-based politics role; she also introduced the "web of institutionalization" as a set of organizational tools of gender diagnosis and gender planning (DPU Gender Planning Team, "Training materials developed for training in gender planning," 1990-1993).

work associated with prestige or status, and which, traditionally, has been performed by men.

Applying gender diagnosis, a few questions are relevant: What roles do men and women involved in VETT have? Do they have similar or different roles? Who has access to and control over the resources, such as property, income, training, jobs, etc.? If they have different roles and different access to and control over resources, then they must have different basic and strategic gender needs.[14] What are these needs? Are they being met? What policy approaches and development policies are adopted in the planning and implementation of VETT policies or programs? Do they target men and women on a welfare basis or do they aim at contributing to the development of society and its human resources? With these questions in mind, the current VETT system in Palestine is examined in relation to the interaction of the four spheres: the political sphere, the organizational sphere, the technical sphere and the research sphere as defined below.

Institutionalization of Gender

Caren Levy proposes the four spheres as the major components of the "web" of institutionalization of gender, with gender being a cross-cutting issue. These four spheres can be the components of one institution or of several linked institutions. In this paper, they form the components of the institution of education and of VETT in particular. At the heart of the political sphere lie men and women who through their experience interpret their own reality and identify their needs. They form political pressure groups and elect their representatives who commit themselves to represent their needs in the organizational sphere. Major actors in the organizational sphere are policy makers who are in charge of designing policies and allocating adequate resources and setting up proper procedures in order to implement these policies. Allocation of resources allows political constituencies and representatives of political structures to represent men's and women's interests and needs and thus fulfill their own political commitments. In addition, men's and women's roles and experiences are closely linked to the technical sphere which is mainly responsible for program and project delivery. Project and program providers plan to implement the policy designed at the political level and are under the direct control of the political sphere. They may be supported by the staff if the policy designed ensures staff development and well - developed methodology. Finally, men's and women's experiences and their interpretation of their own reality form a basic core for the research sphere which can uncover their needs and interests; its findings can be used to improve program and project delivery. The reverse may also be true; research on program and project delivery can be informative to men and women and raise their awareness. Research also contributes to building a solid theory which feeds into methodology, which in turn helps improve staff development and delivery of services.

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[14] The Gender Diagnosis approach identifies two kinds of gender needs: practical gender needs, which when met, improve men's and women's living conditions and eases their daily tasks related to their reproductive, productive and community managing roles; these needs are usually concrete and visible. On the other hand, strategic gender needs are more abstract and invisible; when met, these needs bring about a change in the social and gender roles of both men and women, thus leading to gender equity. See C. Moser, 1985, pp. 37-41.

Gender Integration

The institutionalization of gender assists gender planning which proposes that for any project or intervention to contribute to social and gender equity, these four interrelated spheres should work in an "orchestrated" manner with gender being integrated in them at all levels. If policy makers design gender-aware policies but do not ensure that services are delivered with gender awareness or do not allocate the necessary resources, their attempt will result in a discrepancy between rhetoric and implementation. If gendered research was not consulted by policy makers or program providers, it will be difficult for any intervention to bring about development or transformation in the society. For political constituencies and structures to fulfill their commitment and exert pressure on policy makers and program providers, they should be aware of the gender interests and needs of men and women. Thus the location of responsibility towards gender is an integral part of each component of the four spheres, and not the responsibility of one party.

This model of analysis is applied to the system of VETT in Palestine to investigate to what extent the four spheres interact and interrelate. This would help us understand the dispersal in decision making and the fragmentation which VETT currently suffers, and would provide guidelines for future planning and sustainable development. Applying this model would also uncover to what extent the research sphere provides information about gender disparities and gender needs of the beneficiaries and whether the program providers are aware of these disparities and, if so, to what extent their awareness is reflected in the program implementation to meet such needs. The findings of the analysis would contribute to paving the way for gender integration and gender planning of future VETT.

III. Historical Development of VETT in Palestine

VETT in Palestine was initiated by charitable institutions targeting disadvantaged groups like the needy, orphans and children of martyrs.[15] Their main targets were families, represented by the males as the breadwinners, with the aim to assist these breadwinners to acquire skills to enable them to find jobs and earn a living. A welfare approach, with an emphasis on poverty alleviation and improving the economic conditions of households, is what underlies social and gender diversities in the structure and development of VETT. Between 1860 and 1952 seven industrial schools and vocational centers were established targeting poor and orphan males only. Maswada and A. A. Al-Kek state the rationale underlying the establishment of every vocational training center (VTC) and industrial and vocational school they describe. Nine of the twelve industrial schools and the few post- secondary VTCs operating currently in Palestine were established by Christian missionaries or Islamic

[15]The concepts of "martyr" and "martyrdom" originate in Islam; anyone who dies for a good cause, i.e., in defense of Islam or one's homeland is considered a "martyr". Traditionally, the community is expected to protect the children of martyrs and provide them with a safe and secure life.

Societies.[16] Among these schools are the Schneller Orphanage School in Jerusalem (1860) the Celesian Brothers Industrial School (1863), Dar Al-Aytam Al-Islamiyyah ("The Islamic Orphanage", 1922), Al-Yatim Al-Arabi ("The Arab Orphan", 1945), Al-Amal School ("The School of Hope"), first established by the Mennonites in 1961 and now run by the Arab Society. Except for Al-Amal School, which is co-ed vocational, all of these schools are exclusively for males; their names are indicative of the welfare approach they adopt.

UNRWA's Contribution

In the aftermath of 1948, UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency) started its involvement in education and vocational training to cater to the Palestine refugees. Although UNRWA was established to serve a somewhat different target group, the Palestine refugees, it seemed to have taken a similar welfare approach, targeting the household in general as represented by the male breadwinner. Its main goal is to provide basic education and basic skills to the refugees to help them survive. On the level of basic education, UNRWA served males and females equally by establishing elementary and preparatory schools. On the level of VETT, it provided more training opportunities for males than for females. It started training in three fields: " 'vocational training' which includes post-preparatory vocational trade courses... post-secondary community college level semi-professional training... and pre-service and in-service training."[17] Gender disparity is reflected in the number of VTCs and the number and type of training fields. Between 1953 and 1962 UNRWA launched three VTCs and one teacher training center; only one was opened, in the Ramallah area, for females, which offered teacher training and training in sewing, secretarial work and beauty care. The other three centers were for males offering a variety of trade courses and teacher training. UNRWA also launched a poverty alleviation program which targeted the most needy refugees, the main target being the household represented by the male breadwinner. Its report on vocational training and job creation states that

> The primary target is the special hardship families themselves. Even though the traditional male breadwinner may be unable to compete for employment in the open market, he himself and other members of the family have or can be taught the necessary skills to run a small family enterprise or be employed in a group scheme."[18]

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[16] See the tables provided in T. Maswada and A.A. Al-Kek. *The Technical And Professional Education In The Occupied Territories*. Hebron: University Graduates Federation ,1992.

[17] UNRWA, "Vocational Training and Job Creation". Vienna: UNRWA Headquarters, October 1992, p.1.

[18] *ibid.*, p.27.

The Jordanian Ministry of Education[19]

When the Jordanian government took custody over the West Bank in the early 50's, it integrated the schooling system into the Jordanian Ministry of Education.[20] The approach it followed complied with the Jordanian education policy which, in terms of gender, favored boys over girls. Vocational education and training was introduced at two levels, the secondary and post-secondary. In the early 1950's, teacher training programs were introduced in the Ramallah Teacher Training Center for Women in 1952 and Khadoury Institute for men in Tulkarem which was originally established in 1930 for agricultural training. Between 1960 and 1962 two preparatory schools in Jerusalem and Nablus were transformed into industrial secondary schools, exclusively for males; in 1964, Al-Arroub Agricultural School for boys was established in Hebron. These schools and colleges followed the Jordanian policy and philosophy of education. The marginalization of women in vocational education and training is clear.

Israeli Occupation

Following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities had full control over all resources, economic sectors, and lives of Palestinians. To serve their market, they opened 13 VTCs, nine in the West Bank and four in the Gaza Strip [21] with males being their major target group. These centers offered a number of training courses lasting between 5 and 11 months. As de Moura Castro observed, "the original intention of these courses was to prepare workers for the Israeli market and to focus on relatively simple occupations, mostly in the construction sector."[22] In 1976, the Israeli Civil Administration founded the School for Registered Nurses in Gaza to train health workers for the health centers it operates. The school admits both males and females and is based in a building annexed to Al-Nasr Hospital in Gaza city. One of the requirements for admission to this school states that the student "must be committed to work for double the period of study [i.e. six years] in health centers run by the government."[23] In 1976 and 1978, the Israeli authorities upgraded two preparatory schools to secondary industrial schools for males, to answer a labor market need in targeted geographical areas, Ramallah and Tulkarem.[24] For similar reasons, in 1992

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[19] Unfortunately, due to movement restrictions, we were unable to investigate the organizational structure of VETT institutions governed by the Egyptian system of education in Gaza. Therefore, reference here will be made to the Jordanian involvement in Palestinian VETT in the West Bank only.

[20] To date the Community Colleges and the Tawjihi (The General Secondary Examination Certificate) are subject to the Jordanian education system, and the certificates awarded to the graduates are still endorsed by the Jordanian Ministry of Education.

[21] Mazen Hashweh. "Towards an Efficient, Effective, and Relevant National Training System in Palestine". Society For Austro-Arab Relations, 1995, p.15.

[22] Claudio de Moura Castro. "Training in Palestine". In *Training In Transition* prepared by Mazen Hashweh, 1994, p. 98.

[23] Taiseer Maswada and A. A. Al-Kek. *The Technical and Professional Education in the Occupied Territories. Hebron*: University Graduates Federation, 1990, p.299.

[24] *ibid.*, 1990, p. 263.

and 1993, industrial schools for men were established in Seelat-Al-Thaher and in Hebron. Throughout the past three decades, however, the Israeli Civil Administration has not provided any kind of agricultural training in the West Bank or Gaza Strip. On the contrary, agricultural training institutions were either closed or practically phased out. An UNRWA report states that the Beit Hanoun Agricultural School in the Gaza Strip, established in 1956, was closed twice; the first closure followed the Israeli occupation of Gaza in 1956 and lasted until 1958; the second closure came following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. [25] On the other hand, the agricultural sections of both institutions, Al-Arroub and Khadoury in the West Bank, were practically phased out keeping only the academic specializations, which were solely teacher training programs.[26]

In addition to the public sector, the private (or non-governmental) sector had its share of involvement in VETT. In the past fifteen years private institutions and NGOs have initiated an additional number of training centers. The 70's and 80's, for instance, witnessed the rise of eight community colleges, five of which are privately owned and three run by the Islamic Awqaf. During the same period, specialized training at the university level started in the Engineering faculties at both Birzeit and Al-Najah universities. In the last ten years a number of NGO centers started adult training; Hashweh reports that there are around 30 local and foreign institutions that offer adult training in agriculture and economic development.[27] In addition to that, Birzeit and Hebron Universities established centers for continuing adult education for the purpose of training and upgrading of skills.

IV. Characteristics of VETT

An examination of VETT uncovers a series of problems regarding its size, student caliber, fragmentation, program provision and most significant of all, its gender disparity. The fact that vocational education has occupied a second rank position in comparison with academic education for several decades goes back to the days of the Greek philosophers who made a sharp division between manual work and intellectual work. In many cases, it has not been treated as having a value of its own capable of contributing to the socio-economic development of societies, but "in particular it has affirmed a particular, and politically charged, image of work and of the relationship between schooling and work."[28] Thus, on the whole, VETT has been used as a band-aid solution to social, economic and political problems arising in times of tension, crisis and/or transitional phases. The historical development of VETT in Palestine, outlined above, indicates that it started as a palliative solution to social and

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[25] UNRWA, "Vocational Education and Job Creation". Vienna: UNRWA Headquarters, 1992, p. 10.

[26] Recently, in 1995, the UNDP has decided to invest in reviving Al-Arroub and Beit Hanoun agricultural centers as part of their agricultural development project. [Based on an interview with Ms Mira Rizeq, the UNDP project manager for Rural Development].

[27] Mazen Hashweh, *op cit.*, p.2.

[28] W. Norton Grubb, "The Phoenix of Vocationalism: Hope Deferred is Hope Denied." In *Reassessing the Link Between Work and Education*, edited by Lewis C. Solomon. California: Jossy-Bass Inc., 1978, pp. 71-73.

political problems through missionary schools, charitable societies, and UNRWA centers. It then developed to conform to the political and economic policies of the Israeli Civil Administration or to respond to the goals of the Palestinian private sector and NGOs. On the whole, it has served a small student population, mostly male, and marginalized women. It has not attracted a good caliber of students or trainees. Its student body is miniscule in size and of much lower quality when compared to the size and quality of students in regular schools or universities. About 3% of the total student population amounting to 56,064 enroll in vocational training; of this 3% only 14.7% are females.[29]

Target Group Attraction

The vocational student cohort is largely composed of low achievers and unmotivated students, mainly coming from poor socio-economic background; these students are attracted by the rather flexible admission policies and the relatively low fees students have to pay. All UNRWA VTCs, for instance, are free of charge but require applicants to hold a refugee card; applicants stand a better chance to be admitted if none of their family members is being or was educated at UNRWA VETT institutions. The applicants' age should be less than 22, and their geographical background is of major significance. All these requirements are given priority over the applicant's interest or academic achievement.[30] To this effect, L. Alami states, " In the regulations governing admission to vocational training institutions... in the majority of cases, the interest of the students, their capabilities as well as their potential for growth are practically disregarded."[31] In a study conducted on female students' interest in vocational and academic training at the Ramallah Women's Training Center, the tables comparing the students' interests to their current specializations show that most students were not interested in what they were studying. The highest rate of conformity between interest and specialization is about 50% representing students in secretarial training (51.72%) and laboratory analysis (50%). The rates representing students' interests in teacher training are more pessimistic; the highest rate of conformity (44%) is in elementary teacher training. [32]

The same kind of problem regarding gender bias and the quality and interest of the enrollees exists in the post-preparatory vocational schools found in the school system. There are 14 vocational schools and centers, of which only one is for females and another is co-educational. Students streamed into these schools are also unmotivated and low achievers. Following Jordanian educational policy, students are directed into the science stream, the arts stream or the vocational stream at the end of

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[29] Claudio de Moura Castro. "Training in Palestine". In *Training In Transition,* 1994, p. 97.
See also the statistics on VETT in Hashweh (1994) and Maswada and Al-Kek (1990), on the basis of which the percentage 14.7% was calculated.

[30] UNRWA. "Training Courses and Admission Requirement." Instructions distributed to applicants by the Ramallah Women's Training Center, (1994-1995).

[31] Lamis Alami. "Factors to Be Considered in the Development of Vocational Education" 1994, p. 6 (Unpublished Paper).

[32] Salwa Abu Zayyad Abdel-Wahad, " Testing Vocational Interests at the UN Ramallah Women's Training Center " (Unpublished). 1992, p. 12.

10th grade. Those students obtaining a B average or higher are allowed to enter the science stream; those with the lowest scores go to vocational schools. The Israeli Civil Administration (CIVAD) VTCs, on the other hand, admit school dropouts to most training courses if they are over 16 years old regardless of their academic background; the applicant's grade is considered only in some professions (e.g. radio and TV maintenance) and in cases of long waiting lists.[33] Private VTCs have to follow Jordanian rules and regulations for admission; students should hold the school leaving certificate (Tawjihi) and have an average of 60 or above. However, since students pay relatively high fees, their admission to these centers is not contingent on their achievement as long as they hold the Tawjihi certificate.[34]

Fragmentation and Dispersal

A second major characteristic of the Palestine VETT system, if it may be called a system, is fragmentation. VETT has been operated by several bodies, each having its own policy and philosophy that direct its functions without any systematic and regular coordination. In fact, there seems to be a general consensus that, for several decades, VETT lacked a central body to supervise it, to plan for it or to carry out a unified policy. Fluitman states, "The vocational education and training system of the occupied territories is small and fragmented, with some notable exceptions, of rather low quality...It is undirected and underfunded."[35] Training provisions at all levels of VETT, for instance, show that vocational programs provided are male-oriented, offering limited types of training. The majority of these programs, which consist of a duplication of specializations, produce semi-skilled labor; community colleges provide a good example of the fragmentation of VETT in Palestine. Currently, there are 17-20 community colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which are run by UNRWA, the Israeli Civil Administration and the Jordanian government (recently, they have been handed over to the PNA), and the private sector. What these colleges have in common is their flexible admission system and graduation regulations: to be admitted to a community college, an applicant must hold the Tawjihi; to be granted the diploma, the student must pass a standardized comprehensive exam required by the Jordanian system. However, these community colleges differ from each other in all other respects, such as curricula, training methodology, qualifications and development of teachers and trainers, facilities provided, funding and student fees.

In brief, VETT suffers from an endless list of problems that are outlined in the available studies and research and which cannot be discussed here in detail. However, it is worth noting that, in the process of suggesting a national training system, Hashweh reviewed both sides of VETT in Palestine, the formal and the informal. He summarizes VETT characteristics in five main points: it is small in

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[33] Mazen Hashweh, *Training In Transition.* 1994, pp. 16-19.

[34] Fees for VETT programs range from no fees to a total of US $ 350. UNRWA VTCs, for example, provide training and boarding free of charge. Civil Administration VTCs provide free training and give a stipend of US $ 35. Private VTCs charge US $ 350 per year. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[35] Fred Fluitman, "Human Resources Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories". In *Training In Transition.* 1994, p. 90.

size; it does not offer enough specializations; it does not produce skilled labor; it is not related to industry; and it shows a very low participation rate of women. [36] It is on these last two issues that the rest of this paper focuses.

V. Gender Analysis of VETT: The Four Spheres

A. The Technical Sphere: Gender Equity Or Gender Disparity

> "The technical sphere is concerned with the making and implementing of plans, programmes and projects, and the extent to which they meet the gender needs of men and women affected by or involved in them." [37]

In light of this definition, what does VETT in Palestine provide for men and women in terms of their roles, and their access to and control over resources? What kind of needs does it meet to provide its graduates with accessibility to employment opportunities? An examination of the number and distribution of the VTCs and the kind of training they provide shows that VETT in Palestine is inequitable and ineffective. Vocational and industrial schools are mainly for boys; training provisions available for dropouts are basically for men with women's participation kept to a minimum. Semi-professional and technical training provided for high school graduates does not seem to meet the needs of either men or women, but is particularly inadequate for women. As for employment, VETT prepares women mainly for work that is traditionally approved of as women's work. The range of professions women occupy as graduates of VETT is, on average, in the extended domain of their reproductive role. In theory what is available and accessible to men, in community colleges for example, is also available and accessible to women, but practice seems to reflect a different reality, revealing the prevalence of serious gender discrepancies.

1. VETT Provisions

Comparing VTCs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem, we find that the Gaza Strip is disadvantaged both in quantity and in variety of VETT provisions. Table 1 below shows the distribution of VTCs in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

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[36] Mazen Hashweh. "Towards an Effective, Efficient, and Relevant National Training System in Palestine". Society For Austro-Arab Relations, 1995, p. 12.

[37] Caren Levy, 1991, p.6.

Table 1. Distribution of VTCs by levels and geographical location.[38]

TYPE OF VTC	GAZA STRIP	WEST BANK
Post-Preparatory Industrial Schools	0	10
Post-Preparatory "Commercial" Schools	0	2
Post-Preparatory Agricultural Schools	1	1
Post-Preparatory CIVAD VTCs	4	9
Post-Secondary Health Schools	4	4
Post- Preparatory UN & other	2	5
Post-Secondary Community Colleges	3	15
Total	**14**	**46**

Whereas there are 46 institutions offering training at different levels in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, there are only 14 in the Gaza Strip; there are no vocational or industrial schools, and the only agricultural school, located in Beit Hanoun, was closed twice and remained so until recently. The Gaza Strip has two teacher training centers, one for women and one for men, which were originally one co-educational center. Two other VTCs are the UNRWA VTC, which offers both trade courses and technical training, and the VTC run by the Near East Council for Churches.

Access to training is supposed to give access to jobs. Women's access to vocational education and training is minimal both in quantity and variety in comparison with what is available to men; as a result, their job opportunities are fewer and more limited. As shown in section III, unlike male low achievers, women have marginal access to vocational education at the post-preparatory level. Of the 14 vocational, industrial and agricultural schools,[39] only two offer training for women, with courses in sewing and "commerce"; all others are male schools offering training that has been conventionally confined to men. These schools provide training in 29 areas producing labor mainly for the construction and services sectors. These areas include car mechanics, carpentry, general electricity, blacksmithing and welding, aluminum works, construction, etc.

Post-Preparatory and Dropout Training Opportunities

On the level of training available to dropouts, a review of the kinds of courses and enrollment figures indicate inefficiency and gender inequity. Training opportunities for men at this level are limited mainly to construction and public services; women's access to available training is even narrower. Enrollment figures in the post-preparatory level VTCs for the year 1993/1994 show a total of 3268 students and school dropouts of whom only 14.7% are female trainees. Except for the Palestinian Institute for Vocational Training (PIVT), a private VTC founded in 1992, all the other VTCs are exclusively for males. The PIVT offers four training fields to both men and women, these include office management, office secretary, advertising, and shoe design.

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[38] Statistical information displayed in this table is based on figures borrowed from and Al -Kek, 1990, which were reorganized for the purpose of data disaggregation undertaken here.

[39] See table 1 in the appendix.

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Table 2. Distribution of students by Gender and field of specialization in PIVT.[40]

Field of Specialization	Male Enrollment	Female enrollment
Office Secretary	18	2
Office Management	20	0
Printed and TV Ads	16	4
Shoe Design	17	3
Total	71	9

The Israeli Civil Administration ran 13 VTCs, nine in the West Bank and four in the Gaza Strip. Hashweh (1995) lists 27 different courses offered at these centers giving training in areas like construction, masonry, auto-repair, carpentry, general electricity, blacksmithing and welding, etc.; other areas include garage licensing, driver instruction, industrial drawing, mechanics for managers and sewing. The majority of these courses are offered to male dropouts while women's enrollment is close to minimal: Of the 27 training courses , only 5 target women; these are sewing, hairdressing, typing and accounting, Hebrew language, and industrial drawing, as shown in table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution of trainees by Gender and field of specialization at CIVAD VTCs.

CIVAD- Fields	Male Enrollment	Female Enrollment
Hebrew Language	40 in 1 VTC	20 in 1 VTC
Hairdressing	30 in 1VTC	84 in 3 VTCs
Sewing	0	228 in 9 VTCs
Industrial Drawing	41 in 4 VTC	6 in 1 VTC
Typing / Accounting / Computers	59 in 2 VTCs	135 in 4 VTCs
TOTAL 4	170	473

The female enrollment rate is highest in sewing, 228 females compared to 7 males, and lowest in industrial drawing, 6 females compared to 41 males.[41] A look at the enrollment figures in the PIVT for the same year shows that women constitute 11.2%, or nine females of a total of 80 trainees. This indicates that opening training courses for women does not necessarily make them accessible. Several factors obstruct women's enrollment in such training courses such as lack of career guidance, high fees, social attitudes and others. The phenomenon of accessibility versus enrollment is more evident in the training programs provided by the community colleges. The factors widening the gap between accessibility and enrollment will be thoroughly investigated in the second stage of the research.

Post-Secondary Training Provisions

Community colleges offer vocational and technical training at the post-secondary level. In all of these colleges and schools, training accessible to women is restricted to areas which are considered an extension of their reproductive role, namely the organization and care of the household, or in areas which prepare them to get jobs in the fields traditionally defined for them. Such areas include teacher

[40] Figures displayed in this table and table 3 are based on statistical data borrowed from Hashweh, 1994.

[41] Specific information on these centers is not accessible except through personal contact with individuals in the Israeli Ministry of Labor; also sources available do not include specific information about the Gaza Strip.

training, pre-school teacher training, nursing, sewing, hairdressing, home economics and house management, nutrition, physiotherapy, interior decoration, etc. There are 17 community colleges, two are in the Gaza Strip and 15 in the West Bank. Six are exclusively for males, three for females and eight are co-educational.[42]

Community colleges provide 47 fields of training, fourteen of which are teacher training programs; the rest are technical and semi-professional training programs. The only female training courses are 7 in total offering training courses in dressmaking and laboratory analysis in addition to other areas of a nature similar to those mentioned above. According to the statistics collected by Maswada and Al- Kek in 1990[43], the total enrollment in community colleges in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip for the year 1987 was 6757, of which women formed around 48%[44] distributed as follows: About 64% (i.e. 2010) of their total enrollment was concentrated in teacher training programs, 15% were enrolled in administrative and financial professions, namely business administration (108) and secretary and office management (212) and the remaining 23% was distributed over semi-professional and technical programs. At first glance, this distribution may be understood as the outcome of the provisions open and available for women. However, an examination of enrollment figures in training programs reveals that such an interpretation is only partly valid.

For almost three decades, most community colleges offered a high dosage of teacher training programs for historical reasons. Except for UNRWA centers and the Polytechnic in Hebron, community colleges were originally teacher training centers. Following a shift in Jordanian educational regulations in 1985 they were all transformed into community colleges shifting their focus to semi-professional and technical training, in addition to teacher training. The Jordanian Ministry of Education declared that graduates of teacher training centers should upgrade their academic qualifications since by the year 1997 they will not be eligible for employment in schools. Thus until the late 1980's the majority of training programs most accessible to women were teacher training programs. But what about other training programs open to them? What do enrollment figures tell us? Examining enrollment numbers of male and female trainees and students in co-educational Community Colleges, we notice that women have high enrollment in trades and vocations that are traditionally sanctioned for women, while their participation in training courses such as mechanical or electronic engineering is either low or non-existent. Table 4 below shows a discrepancy in women's and men's enrollment in the co-educational colleges.

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[42] See tables 3, 4, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 in the appendix.

[43] The number 6757 is the sum of student enrollment given individually for each communiy college in Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990, pp. 117-218.

[44] Muhanned Tull (1995) reports on 14 Community Colleges. Enrollment figures he provides for the year 1994 show a total of 4059 (50% females and 50% males). However, in my opinion, this should not be considered a drop in enrollment because Tull excludes teacher training and Islamic Studies programs.

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Table 4. Distribution of students by Gender in co-ed community colleges.
Source: Data presented here is based on statistical information borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990.

	Enrollment by Numbers and Percentages				
Community College	**Male #**	**Male %**	**Female #**	**Female %**	**Total**
Polytechnic College	840	88%	111	12%	951
Islamic Studies College	33	29%	161	71.%	225
Al-Najah National College	211	35%	391	65%	602
Al-Ibrahimiyah College	323	50.5%	219	49.5%	451
Al-Ummah College	88	22.5%	304	77.5%	392
Bethlehem College	9	60	6	40%	15
Al-Asriyah College	481	77.5%	140	22.5%	621
Al-Rawdah College	176	39%	445	61%	621
Total 8	**2073**	**54%**	**1777**	**46%**	**3840**

For instance, women form 12% of student enrollment in the Polytechnic, 22.5% in Al-Asriyah Community College and 77.5% in Al-Ummah College. These enrollment figures may be explained with reference to the available areas of specialization. The Polytechnic offers 12 specific training courses in engineering , computer skills, fine arts and ceramics, and agricultural mechanics. Female enrollment rates in these fields are as follows: 44% in computers, 28% in ceramics, 21% in interior decoration, and 7% in surveying. Al-Ummah College offers training courses in teacher training, computer programming, secretarial work and accounting. Women' s enrollment rate in teacher training is 72.3% of the total number of students; it is 27.7% in the other fields. In comparison, Al-Asriyah College has a teacher training, technical training and semi-professional training in engineering, the para-medical professions, and business. The highest enrollment of women in this college is 94% located in the teacher training programs; there is no female enrollment in law, media, health supervision and hotel management. It should be indicated that most community colleges have a teacher training sector, including training in elementary education, recently transformed into Child Education, in which women form a high majority; out of 612 male and female students, women constitute 75% .

Low participation of women in courses open for both men and women might imply that women are not interested in exploring new areas, or that they feel they are unable to cope with such specializations. However, opening non-conventional paths for women does not necessarily mean that they have access to these paths. Several factors seem to be at play; social attitudes and relation to employment opportunities are only two. Such questions are still to be explored; however, a few instances may be mentioned here which can offer some tentative answers. In an interview with the UNRWA Chief Education Officer, L. Alami, she stated that in several cases the father has come to the VTC and decided on the kind of training his daughter should have. Being present at a few colleges during registration and admission, I observed ten cases of women applicants, five of whom were accompanied by a parent or a brother or a husband who spoke for them; three women were not even present. During a meeting with the Assistant Director General of VETT at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the meeting was interrupted by a woman who wanted to apply for her daughter to attend a community college in Jordan. She said, "Please help me. If you leave it to me I cannot afford to pay for her

education. I have boys studying at the University. Her uncle volunteered to pay for her expenses. She will live with him and will join this college which is next door to his house." In response to the kind of field the young woman was interested in, the mother answered, " She wants to study nursing but we want to apply for assistant pharmacist. It is the only available field at the college." In the majority of cases, as shown earlier, female students at the UNRWA the Ramallah Women's Training Center (RWTC) are enrolled in fields incompatible with their interests. Such attitudes indicate that women do not practically have access to training courses, even though these courses are theoretically open to them. Also, they may have access to training but they may not have control over where to be trained or in what to be trained.

2. VETT And Employment Opportunities

Restrictions on access to VETT provisions are a major source of the constraints women face in employment opportunities. A comprehensive understanding of the role of VETT in providing equal opportunities for men and women cannot be reached unless we investigate their access to employment. It was shown earlier that employment chances for both men and women are restricted by political and economic measures inflicted by the Israeli occupation, by political and economic crisis in the region, and by the absence of systematic national planning. However, apart from such constraints, an investigation of employment rates and the labor market segregation reflects gender disparity caused by the traditional gender division of labor.

To examine the relation between education, training and employment, the relevant FAFO data[45] collected from interviews with 319 (100 females and 219 males) randomly selected individuals were analyzed for the purpose of this study. Although the numbers are relatively small, they indicate gender differences in relation to education and employment. The subjects were asked about the highest level of education they had achieved and the work they were doing for the last year at the time of the survey.

Table 5. Distribution of female subjects by highest level of education attained and type of work.

Type of work	Highest Type of Education					Total
	Basic	Secondary	Post-Secondary	University Degree	No Such Education	
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Industry	1	0	0	0	0	1
Commerce	3	2	0	0	0	5
Public Services	9	10	31	10	0	60
Farming/Fishing	4	0	0	0	0	4
Transportation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	19	4	5	2	0	30
Total	**36**	**16**	**36**	**12**	**0**	**100**

Figures presented in tables 5 above and 6 below show that irrespective of the level of education, women are concentrated in jobs in the public services sector while men are distributed over a range of employment sectors. Out of 100 women 60 work in public

[45] The analysis presented here was done on raw data taken from the FAFO survey 1992. Acknowledgment should be given to Jamila Abou Dahou who did the SPSS analysis.

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services and 30 in jobs other than those specified by the survey. The level of education of these women ranges from attaining basic education (kuttab "religious schools and primary education) to holding a University degree.

Table 6. Distribution of male subjects by highest type of education attained and type of work.

Type of work	Highest Type of Education					Total
	Basic	Secondary	Post-Secondary	University Degree	No Such Education	
Construction	28	19	7	2	1	57
Industry	17	13	3	0	1	34
Commerce	10	8	0	4	0	22
Public Services	14	11	11	7	4	47
Farming/Fishing	14	14	1	0	2	31
Transportation	8	5	0	0	1	14
Others	10	1	2	1	0	14
Total	**101**	**71**	**24**	**14**	**9**	**219**

On the other hand, out of 219 men 101 completed basic education and 14 obtained a University degree. One quarter of the men worked in construction; their level of education ranges from no education to holding university degrees. Twenty percent of the men worked in public services, seven of whom only hold a university degree. One may conclude that women may have access to education, but their employment opportunities are limited in variety which reflects the concept that male wage-earners are given priorities in employment, and that the types of jobs females occupy are traditionally sanctioned.

A clearer picture of education and employment opportunities, showing a pattern of gender division of labor, is reflected in the distribution of employees at VETT institutions. Maswada and Al-Kek give the following distribution of community colleges employees according to gender and academic qualifications. The figures displayed in tables 7 and 8 below show that among employees there are fewer women than men, and these women have low academic qualifications.

Table 7. Distribution of employees at the community colleges by level of education, positions and Gender

Level of Education	Administrators		Faculty		TOTAL		Percentage of Women
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Ph.D.	0	4	2	20	2	24	7.5%
MA	1	16	11	110	12	126	9.4%
High Diploma	0	5	1	20	1	25	4%
BA	18	77	68	287	86	386	19%
Post-Secondary	38	48	18	64	56	112	34%
High School	13	42	4	0	17	42	30%
Basic Education	6	6	2	0	8	6	57%
Total	**76**	**198**	**106**	**501**	**182**	**699**	**25%**

The highest ratio of women (19%) holding a degree in higher education is at the BA level; these women mainly occupying teaching positions. In administration, there are 18 women with a BA and about 51 women out of 227 administrators who have completed secondary or post-secondary courses. The jobs these women have are either administrators at women's colleges or as secretaries in different colleges. Statistics provided in Maswada and Al-Kek show that there are 32 women administrators in two women colleges in Ramallah and that women form a majority among faculty (64%) and administrative staff (82%) only in the two women's

colleges; in co-ed colleges, however, they are a small minority constituting around 9% among teachers and 22.8% among administrative staff. In men's colleges women's presence among the teaching faculty is negligible. They hold less than 4% of the teaching positions, but occupy about 23% of the administrative posts. On the other hand, the rate of men's employment is higher in all types of colleges. One does not find one women's college where men do not occupy teaching or administrative posts. They constitute about 35% of the teaching faculty and 18% of the administrative staff. A major difference between men and women in only men's and only women's colleges is that women hold office and secretarial positions while men are usually in decision-making positions. In al-Najah Community College and the Polytechnic, for instance, the Dean and the program coordinators and directors are all males. In Ramallah Women's Training Center, three out of seven program coordinators are males. In Kalandia, there are only three females, two secretaries and one in services.[46] One last observation is that men are at an advantage even in the services sector in all types of colleges, forming 77.5% of the services positions at women's colleges.

What does such disaggregation tell us?

Low participation of both men and women in VETT programs in comparison with academic programs indicates that VETT is not very attractive to youth. In general, it does not meet their needs of employment or social mobility. Regarding both education and employment opportunities, priority is apparently given to men. The analysis outlined above shows that men have more access to education at all levels and have more access to employment. Available statistical data is insufficient to arrive at the source of the problem. A few questions remain unanswered. For instance, do men, and women in particular, have the freedom to choose the college or field of study? Do the fees influence their choice? Do they know which skills are marketable? Do they know if they would be or would not be employed after completing their training? Are they aware of VETT provisions? Do women have sufficient information about the existence of fields other than teaching and secretarial work? Are they instructed that they have limited abilities and chances, or that they will not be employed after graduation, or that marriage is their sole future chance? Would they be denied admission to new fields? Although these specific questions should be raised and answered, a major source of the inefficiency and inequity in VETT provisions lies in the political, organizational and research spheres analyzed in the sections below.

B. The Political Sphere

The political sphere is composed of all the social and political structures involved in making decisions; gender analysis and planning is concerned with how decisions are made and whether decision making represents men's and women's interests and concerns.[47] Historical and political developments in Palestine resulted in placing the responsibility for VETT policy and formal decision-making on

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[46] Data used here were gathered during personal interviews and observation at the mentioned colleges.

[47] Caren Levy, op cit., p.3.

four bodies; the first is the public sector represented by the Jordanian government and subsequently by the Israeli Civil Administration Labor and Education departments.[48] The other three bodies are the UNRWA Department of Education, the private sector, and the NGOs. To this end, we can say that the policies set for VETT over the past decades have not and could not have taken into consideration the interests and needs of Palestinian men and women and the development of the society as a whole because planning and decision-making processes and structures were dispersed and the participation of the Palestinians themselves in this sphere was marginal. These various, sometimes contradictory, macro policies resulted in a small and fragmented system which did not render VETT useful for employment or able to serve the sustainable development of Palestinian society or upgrade and expand the labor force. The implications underlying VETT policy show that VETT has partly served the purpose of adaptation only, rather than transformation of labor roles and relations. If we compare the intentions of policy makers with the goals achieved through their provisions, we find that, on the whole, their main concern is not to serve the development of Palestinian society, and they do not show any kind of gender awareness. Men are identified as the main breadwinners and as the main component of the labor force. As such men are targeted for training; women, on the other hand, are seen as taking mainly a traditional reproductive role and as playing a minimal role in production.

Israeli Occupation: Responding to Demands of the Israeli Labor Market

The Israeli Civil Administration was concerned with short-term informal training in order to supply the Israeli market with cheap Palestinian labor. Israeli short-term training that is regulated by the demand in the Israeli market has had serious negative effects on the Palestinian economic system and the composition of the labor force. The Israeli policy of confiscation of land and exploitation of Palestinian water resources throughout three decades of occupation has completely marginalized the agriculture sector, a major sector of the Palestinian economy. In addition it has driven labor out of agriculture, created semi-skilled labor for temporary employment, affected wages and limited women's training and employment opportunities. Subsequently, the kind of VETT provided by the Israeli Department of Labor varied with the demands of the Israeli market. Construction and services for men and sewing for women were the main domain of the Israeli VETT provisions. For instance, there were at least 6 centers in the West Bank offering five-month training courses for men in construction and masonry in comparison with only one 14-18 months training course in radio and TV repair. Nine centers provided five-month courses in sewing for women. Thus, fluctuation in the demands in the Israeli market led to fluctuation in labor force participation, mostly affecting women. The absence of a social support system, structural power relations which exclude women from entrepreneurship, and training mainly in sewing, are all factors that confined women to work at home. They are thus part of the informal economy and are left at the mercy of middlemen with very low wages, unprotected by any kind of social

[48] Only a year ago the PNA Ministry of Education took charge of education and higher education. However, the community colleges are still linked to Jordan through the curricula and the Comprehensive Exam, a major requirement for degree authorization.

support. In brief this policy has not provided training to give Palestinians access to employment or to promote their economic growth . In a study on VETT, Caranoy states:

> The problem of equitable and efficient VET policies is complex. On the one hand, VET policies...are able to promote economic growth by extending existing skills and by introducing new ones to the labour market... At the same time, government can use VET to distribute the fruits of such growth more equitably through the kinds of VET in which it invests. On the other hand, for VET policies to achieve these goals means fitting them closely to the labour market- specifically to the growth of jobs available , to the quality of those jobs in terms of wages paid and the security they provide, to the nature of private training in those jobs, and to the distribution of educational resources in general .[49]

UNRWA Policy: Welfare or Development?

The policy guiding VETT provisions offered by UNRWA for over three decades has been informed by a welfare approach, targeting needy refugees; their basic policy line is to equip youth with skills to be able to earn a living and provide basic needs for their families. Throughout their involvement in VETT for Palestine refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and other Arab neighboring countries, UNRWA's concern has been "... to meet the demands of the labor market, especially the labor market in the Middle East."[50] For over three decades, UNRWA VETT provided the Palestinians with training, mainly in teaching and other trades to give them access to job opportunities in the Gulf and in other Arab countries. However, linking VETT to the demands of the labor market in the Middle East has made Palestinian access to employment resources subject to changes in the political situation in such an unsettled region. The Gulf War, for instance, closed employment opportunities in the face of Palestinian labor and left thousands of Palestinians, mostly women, unemployed. UNRWA reports that integrating women is a keystone of its policy. For instance, it reserves 56% of the teacher-training seats and 22% of the technical training seats for women.[51] Although this policy has served women giving them access to teaching jobs, in the long run, confining women to the teaching field made them suffer more seriously than men in times of political crisis. A UN report states that "... the current post-Gulf Crisis labor market negatively affects Palestinian women as well as men, particularly in occupations such as school teachers in which UNRWA female graduates for decades found employment opportunities in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other Gulf states." [52]

UNRWA has continuously evaluated its programs in terms of the labor market demands and according to regional and global political and economic

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[49] Martin Caranoy. "Efficiency and equity in vocational education and training policies ". *International Labour Review,* vol. 133, 1994, No. 2, p. 222.

[50] UNRWA. "*Vocational Training and Job Creation*". Vienna: UNRWA Headquarters, Oct. 1992, p. 9.

[51] UNRWA . *"Human Resource Development"*. Vienna: UNRWA Headquarters, Oct. 1992, p.11.

[52] *op cit.*, p.5 .

changes. In UNRWA's 1992 document, "Human Resource Development", reports are given on the measures taken to fight against the disadvantages of women. The initial policy was to target both men and women to be able to support their families; girls were encouraged to get basic education and to join literacy courses; while boys were encouraged to attend "trade courses leading to employment, girls were taught skills for domestic production."[53] For this purpose 59 centers were established in 1951 offering training in sewing, needle work and childcare. This program continued for 35 years, though with a focus on sewing. However, global and national political and economic changes led UNRWA to make a shift in its direction. To this end an UNRWA report states:

> Change came with the intifadah with its attendant awareness of the potential and needs of women... with the explosion of concern for the role of women in development, prompted by the United Nations Decade for Women...[54]

Accordingly, UNRWA states that it redefined its goals following a "developmental social welfare" approach rather than providing relief services. Women's programs were mainstreamed in the services program rather than being left as marginal.

In targeting disadvantaged women, UNRWA's practice does not seem to fully realize its stated policy. In some sense, UNRWA is ahead of other institutions in that it is meeting women's practical gender needs; however, its practices do not target women's strategic gender needs. The stated goals for women's programs was to give women access to skills and employment, to assist them in dealing with their "family and social problems, and to develop their role in the communities." [55] This focus does not conform with the statement made regarding the change in approach. UNRWA launched activities which are claiming to bring the women participating in these programs into the decision-making circle; women choose the courses, find the trainer and negotiate the cost. Through these centers, UNRWA meets the women's "practical gender" needs, such as providing nurseries or pre-school facilities at the center and providing them with take-home hot meals. The courses offered, however, are confined to areas like industrial-machine knitting, sewing, food preservation, and computer skills. Though their stated policy implies that they are aware of the triple role of women and the importance of their involvement in development, the training courses offered reveal otherwise: UNRWA's real conceptualization of women's role is in reproduction while their productive role is an extension of their reproductive role: the real target is the family and not the women themselves.

NGOs: Nationalism and Development

Although a thorough study of NGO policies is not within the domain of this study, we can refer to the broad policy that has guided their operations and their VETT provisions. Initially, NGOs were guided by national commitment towards

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[53] *ibid.*, p. 7

[54] *op cit.*, p. 8

[55] *ibid.*, p. 8

the practical needs of the poor, orphans and children of martyrs. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, several charitable societies were established. In 1948, the Arab Women's Union started its services for the needy in several parts of the West Bank. Following the 1967 war, In'ash Al-Usra Society ("Family Relief Society") started giving services to the children and families of martyrs in order to preserve the Palestinian family and help it survive through difficult political and socio-economic conditions. In the 1980's, particularly at the outset of the ***Intifadah*** , NGO operations responded to the ***Intifadah*** slogans: development should serve the goals of the national struggle and the steadfastness of Palestinians under occupation. Thus cooperatives, income generating projects and popular teaching were main concerns in order to implement slogans like going back to the land and boycotting Israeli products and the Israeli labor market. In the absence of a Palestinian state, several grass-root and development organizations took up the community managing role providing public services in the areas of health, agriculture, and informal education and training; for example, the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees trains village health workers, the Women's Studies Center and Bisan Center offer non-conventional training and upgrading of skills for empowerment and capacity building purposes, MAAN Center offers training in permaculture; through its women's development program, it organizes non-traditional training courses in home gardening, management skills and home maintenance and environmental issues. However, to be fair in evaluating NGO policies and their impact on the lives of men and women served by NGO programs in comparison with formal VETT, an in-depth study of their policies and provisions is needed.

C. The Organizational Sphere

The small-sized and fragmented system of VETT outlined in the technical sphere is the output of its inter and intra-organizational structures which are responsible for planning and implementation. Gender analysis is concerned with investigating whether such structures operate in a gender-aware way.[56] As mentioned earlier, VETT in Palestine has been operated by four separate bodies all of which run similar formal training programs at the level of community colleges. At the intra-organizational level, these bodies barely have any links or common ground although they are officially governed by similar rules and guidelines. At the inter-organizational level policy and organizational matters are concentrated in the hands of a handful of people.

Inter-organizational Structure

Fragmentation of VETT in Palestine has had its impact on Palestinian society in general and Palestinian women in particular; in brief, it has not helped the development of society nor has it been sufficiently gender-aware. At the top of the hierarchical structure has been the Israeli authorities since 1967 controlling the existence and the development of community colleges and government training centers. Next in the hierarchy comes the Jordanian and the Egyptian governments,

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[56] Caren Levy, *op cit.*, p.7-8.

represented by their Ministries of Education. Until the PNA took over education in August 1994, Palestinian schools and community colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were subject to the rules and regulations governing the Jordanian and the Egyptian education systems respectively, with ultimate control in the hands of the Israeli Civil Administration. UNRWA as a VETT provider occupies a unique status: it is limited by the general guidelines of the Israeli authorities and by the rules and regulations of the Jordanian Ministry of Education. However, it is directly responsible to its Education Department placed in Jordan which is directed by UNRWA's Headquarters office in Vienna.

Israeli Authorities as Decision-Makers

As occupying forces, Israeli policy does not target human resource development that could in the long run contribute to the development of Palestinian society; neither is it expected to find gender integration in the competence of their policy makers. Being at the top of the hierarchy of the organizational structure, they have controlled all formal decision-making regarding financing, structure, and staffing of all governmental educational institutions. Until August 1994, they were in full control of all educational institutions including the six colleges in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The training programs in these colleges were mainly teacher training programs which were never adapted to meet the needs of the market or recent technological and economic developments. They were underfunded and the majority of their premises were rundown. The establishment of any new VETT institution, the launching of new programs and the everyday operation of VETT have been subject to decisions made by the Israeli authorities. No community college has been allowed to operate if it did not have a license authorized by the Israeli authorities; the license has to be annually renewed and it may be terminated any time if the college administration does not abide by the terms of Israeli Military Order 854, an order issued to enforce security measures rather than academic or administrative matters. Recently, the siege of Jerusalem has had a major impact on enrollment in the different community colleges located in the vicinity of Jerusalem and in the southern part of the West Bank. According to the director of Al-Ibrahimiyyah College in Jerusalem, due to the closure of Jerusalem, their student enrollment dropped from over 600 to about 240 students; ninety percent of their applicants this year are females from the suburbs of Jerusalem. This has led them to close down some of their training programs.

Given that the Israeli main focus has been on producing semi-skilled labor, mainly for the services and construction sectors in the Israeli market, Israeli authorities have transformed four academic schools into vocational and industrial schools. While, on the other hand, agricultural training is needed in an agricultural area like the West Bank, the Israeli Civil Administration did not offer any training courses in agriculture and in the 1970's they practically phased out the agricultural section of Al-Arroub and Khadoury. Such decisions were made in accordance with the general policy of the Israeli authorities concerned with keeping the occupied territories economically dependent through halting the development of agriculture and not allowing industry to grow.[57]

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[57] Musa Buderi. "The Modern Social History of Palestine". In *Palestinian Society In the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, edited by Lisa Taraki. Dar Al-Aswar: Akka, 1990, pp. 54-55 (in Arabic).

Jordanian Ministry of Education[58]

The actual involvement of the Jordanian Ministry of Education was between 1950 and 1967 when Jordan had custody over the West Bank. The Ministry was then in charge of establishing and developing the schooling system. Jordanian policy focused on producing teachers and agriculturists to develop their education and agricultural sectors. Thus, decisions were made to establish teacher training and agricultural training centers. On the other hand, streaming high school students into science, arts and vocational or industrial on the basis of academic achievement in the 9th grade indicates that vocational education is reserved for low achievers, implying that VETT is of a lower rank than academic education. The fact that no vocational school was established for girls implies that Jordanian VETT policy did not consider it necessary for female low achievers to receive training; they could stay at home and wait to get married. The only training opportunity open for them is teacher training. Such a decision on the part of Jordanian policy makers reflects the fact that the role set for women at that time was reproductive. Although it is known historically that Palestinian women's informal participation in agricultural production is very high, it had not been recognized as productive work, but as an extension of their reproductive role. Thus, agricultural training programs were not accessible to women.

Following 1967, the Palestinian education system and curricula, now controlled by Israel, remained tied in practice to the Jordanian Ministry of Education. Decisions taken regarding changes in the system or the curricula in Jordan were imposed on the Palestinian system. In 1985, based on a study of their own situation and labor market needs, Jordanians launched the system of community colleges focusing more on technical training and phasing out the two-year teacher training programs. This change affected the teacher training colleges in the West Bank and forced them to abide by the new direction regardless of its appropriateness to the specific conditions here, since, under the new Jordanian regulations graduates would not be eligible any longer for teaching positions in schools. Moreover, all students in community colleges have to sit for a comprehensive exam at the end of the second year; the curricula outlines and the exam guidelines are set by the Jordanian education system, which is also in charge of endorsing the certificates. Some Palestinian community colleges see this link as a burden restricting them from developing the curricula to suit their own situation. They have to abide by the number of hours set for each course and by the general outline of the curricula used in Jordan if their students have to sit for the comprehensive test and receive certificates that would give them access to jobs.

Intra-organizational Structure [59]

The intra-organizational structure of VETT providers is expressed in the practices of the institution. The issue to be raised is whether the institution is

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[58] See footnote 18 above.

[59] This section is based on data collected during personal interviews with the deans of the two UNRWA community colleges and six private colleges. They do not refer to the status of the four community colleges currently run by the PNA since at the time of this study they were still in the process of restructuring.

promoting equal opportunities in decision making structures; whether it is meeting gender needs in terms of internal staffing and staff development; and whether methodologies used and procedures set up are a reflection of gender aware planning. The internal organizational structure in these institutions functions within a male-dominated framework; very few women are in decision making positions. Except for the two women's colleges, all the rest have male deans and male-dominated boards, and regardless of the gender of the institutions' students, the majority of program coordinators are males. However, while some expressed their desire to integrate gender considerations in their planning , other constraints such as financial, legal and capacity considerations make it near impossible in practice.

Non-Governmental VETT Internal Organization

In most of these colleges, decisions concerning staffing, staff and program development are made by a board of trustees and the director or dean of the institution. Internal staffing and staff development at the community colleges do not reflect gender awareness. As indicated in section III B above, the majority of staff and faculty members are males who are also more qualified than the female staff; no measures are taken to recruit more female staff although a very few complained about not being able to reach female applicants even when they advertised for them. Due to its second-rank status, VETT in general does not attract well-qualified teachers or trainers. In this respect, very little is done to improve the situation; for instance, except in UNRWA institutions, promotion and allowances for VETT staff are non-existent. Because these institutions are facing financial problems, their staff receive low pay and thus are also engaged either in private businesses or in teaching in other institutions to meet the challenges of the general rise in the standard of living. None of these institutions provides services to meet gender practical needs, such as pre-school facilities.

Staff development is not part of community colleges' practices. It is generally known that the staff attracted to work there is of lower quality than that attracted to universities; however, they do not have any procedure to give their staff in-service training or send them on short training courses outside the country, partly because some lack the vision and partly because some have financial constraints. In general, the majority follow a traditional methodology which is restricted to staff recruitment that meets the minimum needs and requirements for VETT programs; they use obsolete curricula and inadequate equipment; they do not initiate training programs on the basis of concrete market surveys or studies of the prevailing socio-economic needs. On the average, VETT institutions lack any system for career guidance and student recruitment. The training programs are offered, but no systematic efforts are made to clarify to the students, and particularly female students, or their parents the importance of the program to their future or its relation to the labor market. Career guidance is done in an improvised manner either on the first day of classes or on registration day if students were not admitted to the field of their first choice. As stated in section IV A above, most women enroll in teacher training programs or secretarial and office management programs. Almost no attempt is made either in advising or in assigning quotas to encourage them to explore other fields. In some cases if male students are interested in entering child education or secretarial

work and office management, they are discouraged, as these fields are assumed to be for women.

UNRWA VETT Internal Organization

Although the institutional and financial constraints that exist in the VETT institutions in general do not seem to be an obstacle for UNRWA, UNRWA does not offer provisions appropriate for development. It has a long tradition of systematic methodology and procedures guiding its provisions and internal organizational practices; financially, it is more stable, and thus, it can allocate the funding needed to pursue issues of staffing, staff development, curriculum and methodology development, and provide training equipment and maintenance. It provides experts that plan for its provisions and supervise their implementation.

In comparison with other VETT institutions, UNRWA has been able to attract higher quality trainers; for instance, vocational and technical trainers receive allowances for their vocational and technical skills. It provides staff development such as in-service staff training and short-term staff training outside the country. Every year, all staff members are required to propose a developmental project within their own field; all such projects are published in a biennial issue after they get approved by the headquarters in Jordan and then they are implemented. However, if such projects are not in line with UNRWA's policy or have budget implications, they are more likely to be rejected. The curricula used at their training centers are constantly evaluated and updated. In addition, UNRWA partially meets the gender practical needs for trainers and trainees. It provides job security and comparatively high salaries. For trainees, it provides free education, free boarding , pocket money and other fringe benefits. It has established an office to follow up on the employment of graduates. However, this office cannot do much to help the graduates since many are trained in areas that are not marketable at least in their area of residence as in many cases trainees are admitted to the field under quota and admission policy restrictions. Since UNRWA's VETT provisions were mainly linked to the labor market in the Middle East and in particular in the Gulf, following the Gulf war, graduates of these provisions suffered unemployment, yet no decisions have been made to introduce new provisions related to the Palestinian labor market. For the past few years male VETT graduates in Gaza had demonstrations and sit-ins in protest against unemployment.

If we examine the intra-organizational structure of the only women's institution, the Ramallah Women's Training Center, we may find a brighter picture. Although mainline policy concerning methodology and procedure for staffing and development is formulated at the headquarters in Vienna, the program providers at this center were able to contribute to the internal organizational policy within the limitations of the general guideline. Internal practices at this center reflect the gender awareness and development vision of the ex-director and the present one. For example, the center has moved away from teacher training, sewing, hairdressing etc. into the area of training for para-medical and commercial professions. However, they encounter difficulties where they cannot escape policy restrictions. For example, due to geographical quota constraints on admission, the Center may have to admit students from a certain geographical area into secretarial courses; upon graduation, however, they may never get employed since secretaries are not employable in their area of

residence. At the same time, the Center adjusted the curriculum in the sewing program to include teaching sewing because this was required by the employers; this modification gave graduates better employment opportunities. The Center has launched a position for student counseling. However, to avoid budget constraints, this position was given to the registrar who finds herself in a bind trying to apply UNRWA's rules and regulations for admission and meeting students interests and needs. In spite of that, she has developed a system of marketing the programs and enlightening school girls to the importance of having a future career and to their economic and social independence. Although her main concern is to keep the programs operating and to encourage enrollment in new fields, the approach she follows reflects her gender-awareness as well as that of the director and staff at the institution. Furthermore, students at the Center are expected to attend a certain number of hours of extra-curricular activities which involve a program for raising students' gender awareness. It is an attempt, although it has not been very successful so far. Although Ramallah Women Training Center may be considered the most developed in VETT provisions and ahead of its male counterpart centers, the conflict between the intra-organizational structure and the inter-organizational structure seems to stand in way in providing training programs more appropriate to the needs of the trainees and the demands of sustainable development.

D. The Research Sphere

The research sphere involves conducting and evaluating studies on the political, social and economic realities of men and women, and evaluating policies underlying programs and interventions in order to feed into a theory that in turn can feed into methodology and procedures for better provisions.[60] This research approach would help in formulating policies that would respond to existing roles and relations meeting practical gender needs and at the same time lead to a transformation in these roles and relations by fulfilling strategic gender needs. Research should aim at being informative in terms of discovering the roles and needs of men and women and their access to and control over the resources to be considered in planning and implementation of programs. In Tanzania, for instance, guided by research, planners were aware of the necessity of women's involvement in technical training; on these bases, they set up certain regulations to guarantee access to such training courses. However, at the implementation stage, women's enrollment did not improve because the attitude of their families and the faculty did not change and the curriculum did not reinforce the new trend.

In light of the above definition of the research sphere, the review of available research and studies on VETT in Palestine reveals that existing research is not informative. Although this paper refers to several studies, the main focus is on Hashweh's "Towards an Effective, Efficient, And Relevant National Vocational Training System in Palestine", the policy document prepared upon the request of the Palestine Ministry of Labor to be used as a terms of reference in their planning for

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[60] Caren Levy. *op cit.*, pp.6-7.

VETT. National and international studies reviewed here have raised several important questions: What system should we follow in planning for VETT: introducing it in the school curriculum or keeping it separate? Which makes VETT more efficient, following the French system of establishing vocational secondary schools or seeking the German model of apprenticeship training and community colleges? Which groups should be targeted and why? Is the goal of VETT to respond only to the needs of any labor market and the increase of production or is it expected to contribute to the economic and social development of Palestinian society? Should it be only adaptive, trying to solve problems of disadvantaged groups, such as poverty and unemployment, or also transformative trying to change inequitable roles and relations?

Studies on VETT in Palestine have tried to address some of the issues raised above.[61] The findings of these studies reveal the characteristics of VETT referred to earlier. Though most of these studies do not deny the gender inequity of VETT, the solutions they provide are contained in one or two statements. For example, they refer to the low participation of women in VETT and recommend introducing non-conventional training fields for women. Or they include women among minority and disadvantaged groups like ex-detainees, dropouts and the handicapped. Fluitman, for instance, criticizes VETT as being inefficient, ineffective, irrelevant and inequitable. To this effect, he states,

> Equity should be an important consideration in the development of training policies. Disadvantaged groups, notably women, the disabled and ex-detainees, should have equal or possibly privileged access to training opportunities which will enable them to be gainfully employed. To this end it may be necessary to establish quotas or special training programmes linked to job creation opportunities. [62]

Muhanned Tull conducted a comprehensive review of most research done in the last six years. He summarizes the recommendations and reform proposals stated in these studies. Examining them one can see that clear and well-defined reform proposals are provided to solve several problems like VETT fragmentation, its inability to respond to the labor market needs or the new technological changes, the lack of adequate equipment and facilities, the low quality of its student body, and its irrelevant and obsolete curricula. However, none of these VETT reform proposals suggests a feasible and serious plan to solve the issue of women's low participation although it is raised as a problem.[63] In his evaluation of the reform proposals and recommendations, Tull himself does not see gender inequity as a serious problem. He criticizes VETT for not responding to the needs of the labor force, the unemployed workers and returnees and places women among special cases. He suggests that

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[61] See Hassan Al-Kek (1988), Maswada and Al-Kek (1990), M. Miaari (1992), Abdel-Shafi (1992), L. Alami (1994), Fluitman (1994), Castro de Moura (1994) , the proceedings of the Ministry of Labor Workshop in Jericho (1994), and others.

[62] F. Fluitman. "Human Resource Development in the Occupied Territories". In *Training In Transition*. 1994, p.89.

[63] Muhanned Tull. "Palestinian Technical and Vocational Training: Current Situation, Problems and Reform Proposals". NFID, 1995, pp. 20-27

"Inadequate orientations towards the needs of special groups especially women, adult workers, handicapped and ex-detainees, and returnees."[64]

Such statements are not based on an understanding of the reasons underlying the under-representation of women in VETT, nor on what their roles and needs are, which would undoubtedly assist in planning for a higher participation. Discussion in these studies implies their unawareness of the triple role of women, of their practical or strategic gender needs, or of their contribution to production, as women's domestic and informal work is not recognized as productive.

Hashweh's study presents an important case among the various significant studies on VETT in Palestine. He states the problem and analyzes some of the factors involved in its making. He summarizes the characteristics of VETT in five main points; the fifth refers to the low participation of women. "...It is shown that women make up only (13%) of the total number of students of industrial and vocational schools and centers."[65] He moves on to analyze this problem referring to work opportunities accessible to women, their low rate in the labor force, wage discrimination, their high fertility rate, and finally their high rate of involvement in agriculture, (giving an estimate that 60%-70% of women participate in production in this sector). However, he does not identify these issues as priorities when suggesting a "possible scenario" for a national vocational training system for Palestine. He suggests three urgent kinds of support to meet the challenges of VETT:

> Raising the level of coordination... Involving industry more actively... Creating a 'Catalyst' to ensure the continuity of the progress of the system in a professional and dynamic way, and through a studied and planned path, responding to the continuous changes in technology and in labour market demands. [66]

This position, in our opinion, follows from a bias towards industry and from the lack of informative research. Considering only the necessity of linking VETT to industry, without any control, will automatically exclude women from training and in turn from participation in the labor force, since it is conceded already that women participate mainly in agriculture. Also basing recommendations on non-informative research results in a neglect of the role of NGO's in adult informal training. Hashweh refers to the presence of such training provided by around 200 NGOs including cultural centers, charitable societies and development training institutions.[67] It is in most of these institutions where women get access to training. There are no studies that explore this area and evaluate the kind of training it provides; findings of such studies will give a different picture of the needs for training. Linking training to industry without meeting the needs of women in other sectors results in depriving them from access to training and job opportunities.

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[64] *ibid.*, p.29

[65] Mazen Hashweh. *Towards an Effective, Efficient and Relevant Training System in Palestine.* 1995, p.2.

[66] *ibid.*, p. 31

[67] *ibid.*, p. 2

5.0 Conclusion

Hashweh's study is valuable in placing VETT in the mainstream of educational and training concerns and in emphasizing the critical importance of coordination and developing an integrated approach to VETT. To this end, he suggests an advisory board and expert team. Here, however, we must emphasize the dual importance of integrating women into this process and, at the same time, integrating gender into planning and policy. This was one of the aims of the roundtable discussion held by the WSP with Hasweh and ministerial representatives from Labor and Education, as well as other experts in the field. The roundtable also highlighted that existing research did not offer an adequate information base for gender-integrated planning. Through a sustained discussion, the initial response of male experts- that gender integration was a women's concern- began to change in a positive direction towards a more comprehensive understanding of gender issues as at the heart of economic and social growth. Specific suggestions at the roundtable included such matters as the importance of vocational and career guidance in schools with real attention to gender needs, as well as taking into account women's work and training needs in the informal sector when undertaking vocational planning to avoid their exclusion from the process. Another point raised above was undertaking a serious evaluation of the training role of local and international NGOs in Palestine. Upgrading teacher capabilities and gender awareness and gender-sensitive curricula are also essential pre-requisites for an equitable and efficient vocational system.

In conclusion, VETT in Palestine is at an important crossroads where the possibilities of developing innovative and integrated approaches to gender and VETT exist in context of a major transition in Palestinian society, economy and governance. The tasks are certainly challenging; the initial framework presented in this paper remains to be augmented by our own further research and intervention in policy debates and discussions.

Appendices

Table 1. Distribution of post-preparatory vocational schools (leading to the Tawjihi) in Palestine .
Source: Information displayed in this table is borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1994.

#	School	Date	Location	Run-By	Gender	Duration	Fields
1	Dar Al-Aytam Industrial School	1922	West Bank	Al-Awqaf	Male	3 years	Vocational Industrial
2	Lutheran Industrial School	1948	West Bank	Lutheran Church	Male	3 years	Vocational Industrial
3	Abdallah-bin Al-Husayn School	1960	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
4	Nablus Industrial School	1961	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
5	Celisian Industrial School	1963	West Bank	Celisian Brothers	Male	3 years	Vocational Industrial
6	Al-Yatim Al-Arabi	1965	West Bank	Al-Yatim Al-Arabi Society	Male	3 years	Vocational Industrial
7	Toulkarem Industrial School	1976	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
8	Deir Dibwan Industrial School	1978	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
9	Seelat Al-Thahriya Industrial School	1992	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
10	Hebron Industrial School	1993	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	2 years	Vocational Industrial
11	Al-Mamouniyya School	1938	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Female	3 years	Commerce Sewing
12	Al-Amal School	1961	West Bank	Al-Amal Society	Co-Ed	3 years	Commerce
13	Al-Arroub Agricultural	1930	West Bank	Israeli CIVAD	Male	3 years	Agricultural
14	Beit Hanoun Secondary	1960	Gaza	Israeli CIVAD	Male	3 years	Agricultural

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Table 2. Distribution of VTCs for drop-outs in Palestine
Source: Information based on data borrowed from Hashweh, 1994.

Name of VTC &/or Directors	Date of Establishment	Gender	Areas of Specialization	No	Duration of Study
CIVAD VTC WB and GS	1968-1970	Male	Construction Masonary Services	1 1 16	5-11 months
Total		**Male**	**3**	**18**	
CIVAD VTC WB and GS	1986-1970	Male Male Male Female?	Garage Licensing Mechanics for Garage Driving School	1 1 1	360 hours 350 hours 30 hours
Total		**Male**	**3**	**3**	
CIVAD VTC WB and GS	1986-1970	Male & Female	Hebrew language Hairdressing Sewing Typing / Accounting & Computer	1 1 1 1	250 hours 6 months 6 months 9-11 months
Total		**M&F**	**4**	**4**	
CIVAD VTC	1986-1970	Male	Radio and TV	1	14-18 months
Total		**Male**	**1**	**1**	
Total		**Male** **Female**	**11**	**26 5**	
Al-Bir Society WB	1952	Male	Vocational Training Agricultural Training	4 1	3 years
UNRWA Kalandia	1953	Male	Vocational Training	10	
Al-Mashrou Al-Arabi YMCA	1948	Male	Carpentry Agricultural Training		3 years Grade 6-9
Al-Mashrou Al-Arabi YMCA	1950	Male	Carpentry & Agriculture		
UNRWA Gaza VTC	1954	Male	Services Construction Teaching Methods & Psychology	11	2 years
Palestine Institute for VT (Private) WB	1992	Mixed (M&F)	Shoe Design Office Secretary Office Management Printed & TV Ads		2400 hours 458 hours 400 hours 2400 hours
NECC VTC	1958	Male & Female	Vocational Tainting	5	3 years

VTC: Vocational Training Center
NECC: Near East Council of Churches
WB: West Bank
GS: Gaza Strip

Table 3. Distribution of community colleges (VTCs at the post-secondary level) in Palestine
Source: Data displayed in this table is borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990.

#	Community College West Bank	Date	Run-By	Gender	Area of Speicialization	
					Teaching	Vocational
1	Polytechnic College	1975	University Graduate Association	Co-Ed	---	15 areas
2	Al-Ibrahimiyah College	1983	Private	Co-Ed	4 areas	4 areas
3	Al-Ummah College	1983	Al-Awqaf	Co-Ed	3 areas	3 areas
4	Al-Asriyah College	1983	Private	Co-Ed	2 areas	12 areas
5	Al-Najah Community College	1965	Private	Co-Ed	3 areas	7 areas
6	Al-Rawdah Community College	1970	Private	Co-Ed	3 areas	8 areas
7	Qalqilia Islamic Studies College	1980	Al-Awqaf	Co-Ed	1 area	---
8	Bethlehem College for Bible Studies	1978	Christian Sector	Co-Ed	1 area	---
9	Kalandia Training Center	1953	UNRWA	M	---	4 areas
10	Al-Arroub College	1958	CIVAD[1]	M	3 areas	---
11	Ramallah Men's College	1965	UNRWA	M	6 areas	4 areas
12	Jerusalem Islamic Studies College	1978	Al-Awqaf	Co-Ed	1 area	1 area
13	Khadoury College	1920	CIVAD	M	7 areas	2 areas
14	Ramallah Women's Training Center (RWTC)	1962	UNRWA	F	6 areas	10 areas
15	Ramallah Women's Center	1952	CIVAD	F	7 areas	---
	Gaza Strip[2]					
16	Men's Teacher Training Center	1964	CIVAD	M	6 areas	---
17	Women's Teacher Training Center	1964	CIVAD	F	6 areas	---

[1] The Colleges run by the CIVAD throughout the past twenty five years of Israeli Occupation are public colleges that were handed over to the Palestinian Authority in August 1994 and have been run by it since then.

[2] The two teacher training centers in the Gaza Strip shown in the table above are not presently in operation. Instead two other VTCs are running; these are Gaza Training College and the Polytechnic in Khan Younis.

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Table 4 . Distribution of areas of specialization in community colleges in Palestine.
Source: Data displayed here is based on information borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990.

#	Technical/Semi-professional Fields	Community Colleges									
		C	D	E	F	I	J	K	M	N	O
1	Banking and Finance				x					x	
2	Business Administration		x		x		x		x	x	
3	Accounting		x	x	x				x	x	
4	Computer Programming	x	x	x	x					x	
5	Office Secretary /Management			x		x	x		x	x	x
6	Computer Skills		x	x	x	x			x		
7	Physio-therapy					x					
8	Lab Analysis					x					
9	Lab Technician		x						x		
10	Health Supervision		x								
11	Assistant Pharmacist		x						x		
12	Agricultural Production										x
13	Media and Journalism		x								
14	Law		x								
15	Hotel Management		x								
16	Hairdressing and Beauty Care					x					
17	Sewing					x					
18	Nutrition					x					
19	Home Economics					x					
20	Ceramics and Fine Arts	x									
21	Engineering	x									
22	Quantity & Specification							x			
23	Building & Construction	x	x					x			
24	Land Surveying	x	x					x			
25	Architectural Drawing	x						x	x		
26	Architecture	x						x			
27	Interior Design/Decoration	x	x						x		
28	Roads & Transportation	x									
29	Mechanical Engineering	x									
30	Electronical Engineering	x									
31	Communications	x									
32	Electric Wiring	x									
33	Agricultural Mechanics	x									

Table 4.1 . Distribution of teacher training and academic programs at community colleges in Palestine.
Source: Data displayed here is based on information borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990.

#	Teacher Training / Academic Programs	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	L	M	N	O
34	Arabic	x			x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
35	English	x		x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x	x
36	Elementary Education			x	x	x			x	x		x	x	
37	Social Sciences	x				x		x	x					x
38	Science							x	x	x				x
39	Mathematics							x	x	x				x
40	Physical Education							x						x
41	Child Education (Nurseries)								x					
42	Religion / (Islamic Education)							x			x			x
43	Sharia						x				x			
44	Bible Studies		x											
45	Wath wa Imama						x							
46	Library Science												x	
47	Home Economics							x						

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Table. 4.2. Symbols and names of community colleges shown in tables 4 and 4.1.

Symbol	Name of Community College
A	Al-Arroub College
B	Bethlehem Bible Studies
C	Polytechnic (Hebron)
D	Al-Asriyah Community College
E	Al-Ummah College
F	Al-Ibrahimiyah College
G	Islamic Studies College (Jerusalem)
H	Ramallah Women's Teacher Training Center
I	Ramallah Women's Training Center (RWTC)
J	Ramallah Men's Teacher Training Center
K	Kalandia Training Center
L	Islamic Studies College (Qalqilia)
M	Al-Rawdah Community College
N	Al-Najah Community College
O	Khadoury College
P	Men's Teacher Training (Gaza)[1]
Q	Women's Teacher Training (Gaza)

[1] The areas of specialization in the teacher training centers in Gaza are not shown here because the data on this matter is general and cannot be classified in the same way it was classified for the other colleges in the West Bank. In the two centers in Gaza, students are admitted to the arts stream or the science stream.

Table 4.3 Distribution of training programs in the community colleges in Palestine for the year 1994-1995[1].

#	Community College / Center Name	Academic / Education Programs	Engineering Programs	Para-Medical Programs	Administration & Finance Programs	Applied Arts	Secretarial Computer	Agricultural Programs	Social Work
1	Polytechnic (Hebron)	---	X	---	---	X	X	---	---
2	Al-Ibrahimiyah	X	---	---	X	---	X	---	---
3	Al-Ummah College	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
4	Al-Asriyah College	X	---	X	X	---	X	---	X
5	Al-Najah College	X	X	X	X	---	X	---	---
6	Al-Rawdah College	X	---	X	X	---	X	---	---
7	Islamic Studies College (Qalqilia)	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
8	Bethlehem Bible Studies College	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
9	Kalandia Center	---	X	---	---	---	---		---
10	Al-Arroub College	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
11	Men's Teacher Training Center	X	---	---	X	---	X	---	---
12	Islamic Studies College (Jerusalem)	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	X
13	Khadoury College	X	X	---	---	X	X	X	---
14	Ramallah Women's Center	X	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
15	RWTC	X	X	X	X	X	X	---	X
16	Polytechnic (Khan Younis)	X	X	X	X	---	X	---	---
17	Gaza Training Center	X	X	X	X	---	---	---	---

[1] Data presented here is obtained from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, October 1995, through an official request. No reference was made to this data at this stage of the study; it is presented here just for comparative purposes.

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Table 5: Distribution of students in community colleges in Palestine for the year 1990.[1]

College	Education/ Teaching		Academic[2]		Engineering		Paramedical[3]		Administrative[4] Finance		Applied Arts[5]		Computer		Agriculture		Media Law		Hotel Management	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Polytechnic (Hebron)	-	-	-	-	639	31	-	-	-	-	36	31	120	49	45	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Ibrahimiyah	63	166	-	-	-	-	-	-	126	33	-	-	33	20	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Ummah	23	220	-	-	-	--	-	-	52	55	-	-	13	29	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Asriyah	122	132	-	-	17	2	149	12	93	4	-	-	42	2	-	-	22/4	--	20	-
Al-Najah	36	209	30	50	-	-	149	12	118	95	-	-	39	25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Rawdah	-	140	-	-	42	8	58	62	155	205	-	-	30	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
Islamic Studies (Qalqilia)	64	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bethlehem Bible Study	-	-	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kalandia	-	-	-	-	119	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Arroub	81	-	-	-	-	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ramallah Men's College	237	-	-	-	-	-	88	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Islamic Studies Jerusalem	-	-	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khadoury	360	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	34	-	-	-	-	
RWTC	-	303	-	-	-	-	-	103	-	80	-	117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ramallah Women's	-	239	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gaza Women's	-	440	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gaza Men's	320	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1306	2010	94	56	860	41	295	177	544	472	36	148	299	155	79	-	26	-	20	-

[1] Figures displayed in this table are borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990. However, for the purpose of the study undertaken here, the figures were recalculated and reorganized.

[2] Academic areas include library science and documentation, Bible studies, *Islamic Sharia, and Imama and Wath.*

[3] Paramedical programs, here, include nutrition and house management offered at RWTC, where the majority of women enrolled in paramedical programs specialize in this area.

[4] Administrative and Finance includes accounting, secretarial and office work, banking and finance. Though the table shows a high enrollment rate for women, the majority of them are in secretarial and office work.

[5] Applied Arts includes arts of ceramics, dressmaking, hairdressing and beauty care.

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Table 6 : Distribution of students in community colleges in Palestine for the year 1994-1995.[1]

Community College	Academic		Education/ Teaching		Engineering		Paramedical		Administrative Finance		Applied Arts		Computer		Social Work	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Polytechnic (Hebron)	-	-	-	-	239	10	-	-	-	-	97	83	43	73	-	-
Al-Ibrahimiyah	3	11	-	63	-	-	-	-	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Ummah	14	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	74	-	-	13	38	-	-
Al-Asriyah	8	20	-	-	-	-	26	16	-	-	-	-	13	3	4	4
Al-Najah	3	51	1	5	29	3	3	11	188	216	-	-	64	60	23	-
Al-Rawdah	3	31	-	11	-	-	91	52	45	34	-	-	20	18	-	-
Islamic Studies (Qalqilia)	-	39	-	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	-
Bethlehem Bible Study	-	-	24	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kalandia	-	-	-	-	51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Al-Arroub	47	-	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Ramallah Men's College	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	-	-	-	23	-	-	-
Islamic Studies (Jerusalem)	-	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	-
Khadoury	-	-	-	-	37	-	-	-	13	6	11	10	9	3	-	-
RWTC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	125	-	40	-	128	-	28	-	47
Ramallah Women's	-	118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gaza Training College	-	-	-	-	64	-	20	-	24	24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Polytechnic Khan Younis	6	-	-	-	83	3	84	53	143	72	100	50	-	-	-	-
Total	84	692	68	172	503	29	224	293	546	490	108	221	285	273	58	64

[1] The data displayed in the table is borrowed from the statistics prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Education and Higher Education for, to be published in *Education Statistical Yearbook*, 1994/1995. It was obtained through an official request. No reference was made to this data in the body of the paper; it is provided here for comparative purposes.

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Table 7. Distribution of teachers, administrators and services staff in Palestine for the year 1990.[1]

Community College	Teachers M	F	Total T	Administrators M	F	Total A	Services Staff M	F	Total SS	General Total
Co-ed Colleges										
Polytechnic (Hebron)	185	10	195	75	10	85	46	0	46	326
Al-Ibrahimiyah	26	3	29	11	1	12	11	1	12	53
Al-Ummah	16	0	16	5	4	9	5	0	5	30
Al-Asriyah	53	16	69	18	17	35	10	2	12	116
Al-Najah	23	6	29	4	2	6	0	0	0	35
Al-Rawdah	45	5	50	10	5	15	8	1	9	74
Bethlehem Bible Studies	12	0	12	5	0	5	0	1	1	18
TOTAL	**360**	**40**	**400**	**128**	**39**	**167**	**80**	**5**	**85**	**652**
Women's Colleges	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**Gen. Tot.**
Islamic Studies (Qalqilia)	6	0	6	6	0	6	7	0	7	19
RWTC	16	42	58	6	21	27	25	14	39	124
Gaza Women's	12	10	22	1	2	3	1	1	2	27
Ramallah Women's	6	10	16	0	9	9	5	8	13	38
TOTAL	**40**	**62**	**102**	**13**	**32**	**45**	**38**	**23**	**61**	**208**
Men's Colleges	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**M**	**F**	**Total**	**Gen. Tot.**
Ramallah Men's	21	3	24	14	2	16	21	0	21	61
Al-Arroub	7	0	7	6	0	6	28	0	28	41
Khadoury	25	1	26	17	1	18	36	0	36	80
Islamic Studies (Jerusalem)	9	0	9	4	0	4	5	1	6	19
Gaza Men's	15	0	15	3	0	3	4	0	4	22
Kalandia	24	0	24	13	2	15	29	1	30	69
TOTAL	**101**	**4**	**105**	**57**	**5**	**62**	**123**	**2**	**125**	**292**
General Total	**501**	**106**	**607**	**198**	**76**	**274**	**241**	**30**	**271**	**1152**

[1] Data displayed in this table is based on statistical information borrowed from Maswada and Al-Kek, 1990. For the purpose of data disaggregation undertaken in this study, this information was recalculated and reorganized.

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Table 8: Distribution of Employees at Community Colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Gender, Academic Degree Held and Type of Post Held for the year 1990.

Academic Degree	Teachers M	F	Total	Administrators M	F	Total	Services Staff M	F	Total
Ph.D.	20	2	22	4	0	4	24		26
MA	110	11	121	16	1	17	126	12	138
High Diploma	20	1	21	5	0	5	25	1	26
BA	287	68	355	77	18	95	364	86	450
Post-Secondary Diploma	64	18	82	48	38	86	112	56	168
Secondary Education	0	4	4	42	13	55	42	17	59
Below Secondary Education	0	2	2	6	6	12	6	8	14
Total	**501**	**106**	**607**	**198**	**76**	**274**	**699**	**182**	**881**

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WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM
AT BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

*Teaching * Research * Community Outreach*

The launching of Women's Studies at Birzeit University comes at a critical time, as Palestinian women, as well as Palestinian society as a whole, seek to address a complex range of social, economic and political issues. Understanding gender relations in Palestinian society, analyzing and debating key social issues facing society, and developing effective gender-aware policies require a comprehensive and sustained initiative. The Women's Studies Program at Birzeit University aims to contribute to this effort through an innovative teaching program, systematic and directed research on gender relations in Palestinian and Arab society, and an active community outreach program.

Teaching: Women's Studies is a Program within Birzeit University's Faculty of Arts; the Program currently offers a minor in Women's Studies. Teaching began in the 1994-1995 academic year. The Program has developed an interdisciplinary core curriculum of eleven courses, among them Introduction to Women's Studies, Women and Development, Women and the Law, Women in Arab Society, the History of Women's Movements, Gender and Discourse, and Women and the Family.

Research: The Women's Studies Program aims to facilitate research on Palestinian women, both through instituting its own research projects and through collecting archival materials and offering services to other researchers. In September 1994, the Program launched an extensive collaborative research project on "Palestinian Women in Society," which aims to produce a gender-informed assessment of the existing state of research in four areas of Palestinian society and social policy relevant to women: education, social entitlements, economy and culture and society. The research project aims to develop research and action strategies that reflect and promote women's needs, interests and rights in the emerging public debate on the future of Palestinian society.

Community Outreach: In addition to its scholarly and academic objectives, the Women's Studies Program aims to develop avenues to empower Palestinian women through a community outreach program in conjunction with the expanding network of Palestinian women's institutions, as well as to contribute to gender-informed public and institutional policies that recognize and secure the economic, social and political rights of all citizens. Current plans include a systematic assessment, from a gender perspective, of training programs in Palestine, and groundwork for gender planning training in selected key institutions and locales.

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